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Young Linguists

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YOUNG LINGUISTS

Chris O'Hara

I used to know a girl,
 (her locker was next to mine),
who proclaimed daily to her spray-tanned,
 fake blonde friend,
 "ohmygod I'm like literally gonna
 kill myself."

And her friend would always respond
 with an apathetic
 "that's hilarious."

One day, as they had their suicide talk,
I asked:
 "well how come you never do?"

She informed me that a recent conference
 of adolescent linguists had decided
to change the English language
 to be less descript, less difficult.

The conference had decided that
 literally now means "probably not gonna happen"
and
 hilarious now means "this could,
 in some contexts be misconstrued
 as something vaguely humorous."

and
 starving no longer refers to African babies,
 gaunt, hollow eyed, with distended bellies.
Real starvation is "I haven't eaten in
 twenty minutes."

and
 freedom, the way politicians use it,
 is no longer Thoreau out in the woods,
 rather, a prisoner behind concrete walls
 and iron bars who now has the *freedom*
 to use the prison library whenever he wants.

And my locker neighbor, Megan,
 never once surprised me,
 by not being there in the morning.